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State Historian and Society Director Ben Jones, far left, and members of the South Dakota DAR dedicated the "Revolutionary War Patriots" marker near the Capitol on August 28. (Photo courtesy Gena Parkhurst with DAR)

Society begins plans for America's 250th birthday in 2026

July 4, 2026 may seem like nearly five years away. But things are already moving around the country to get ready to celebrate the Declaration of Independence's Semiquincentennial. Congress created a commission and it has begun its work organizing at the federal level.

We plan to begin setting up an organization at the state level later this year. What form that will take is still to be determined, but it's good to know that organizations like the Daughters of the American Revolution are already raring to go. On August 28, the South Dakota DAR held one of their regular state meetings in Pierre and took the opportunity to dedicate the "Revolutionary War Patriots" marker commemorating "the men and women who achieved independence." When next visiting Pierre, take a walk down to the Veterans' monument near the Capitol and you can see it on your way to the WWII and Korean War memorials. It's a good reminder of how it all



From the SDSHS Director
Benjamin F. Jones

began and a recognition to those who set us down this unique path.

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Field Reports

Booth celebrating 125 years in 2021

The D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery & Archives in Spearfish is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2021. Established in 1896 to propagate, stock and establish trout populations in the Black Hills of South Dakota and Wyoming. Renamed D.C. Booth Historic National Fish Hatchery and Archives in the early 1980's, the facility is still dedicated to fish culture and resource management today.

Visitors are welcomed to this free family attraction as they celebrate throughout the year! Historic venues including the Von Bayer Museum, Fish Rail Car, Historic Booth House and Yellowstone Boat are staffed with volunteers providing interpretive information. Everyone loves the Underwater Viewing Area and of course, feeding the fish.

Several events have been held to celebrate, including a "Photography at the Hatchery" day, a puppet show, music performances, trout cooking demos, D.C. and Ruby Booth in character, plant identification showcasing Ruby's Garden, plein air painting, and more.

The hatchery hosted a car show on Sat, August 14. Speakers that day included Rick Mills of the SD State Railroad Museum and Roger Lessly, a local volunteer that worked on replica of Fish Rail Car #3. Jace DeCory presented on Native American culture on August 25.

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Information on the hatchery, its 125th celebration and activities is available at dcboothfishhatchery.org and on its Facebook page. Videos have been posted of the 125th events, allowing everyone to take part in the 125th party. Admission is free.

Life-size bronze statues of South Dakota Governors Charles Sheldon of Day County (1893-1897), Coe Crawford of Pierre and Huron (1907-1909) and Carl Gunderson of Vermillion (1925-1927) were unveiled at the Capitol in Pierre on June 11 and were installed on the Trail of Governors. Believed to be the only project of its kind in the country, the Trail now includes statues of 28 of the 31 former South Dakota Governors. In June, 2022, they will be joined by the remaining three, Andrew Lee of Vermillion (1897-1901), Frank Byrne of Faulkton (1913-1917) and W.J. Bulow of Beresford (1927-1931).

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I'm old enough to remember the Bicentennial. As a third grader I can recall being in a parade with my elementary school classmates, participating in essay contests, and putting together a time capsule that will be opened up in July 2026. Nine-year old me enjoyed all that a great deal. Now the torch has passed on to folks like you and I to organize something that has the same kind of impact. What will we be doing in 2026 that will educate South Dakotans of all ages while making the event memorable and meaningful? It needs to be more than a normal July 4th. So, I ask that you begin to think of ideas for your community, reach out to other organizations and friends to chat about it and when we have set up a state organization to support local efforts, you will be ready to go.

In the meantime, you might be interested in looking over the America250.org website for a wide variety of ideas and resources.

For more information visit the Trail of Governors website: www.trailofgovernors.com.

The Pioneer Museum in Hot Springs had a replica of the first modern hot air balloon on display during August. The balloon was the featured attraction during the Balloon Festival on August 28.

The Depot Museum in De Smet has had several personnel changes. Elaine Behm is the new chairperson of the board of directors. Helen Gehm and Ellen Schubloom resigned their positions on the board and were replaced by Helen Janish and Brenda Kruse. Marlene Somsen will be taking over all the cataloging in 2022 for the museum, as Sharon Peterson has resigned. Museum hours are Noon to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Friday.

The Casey Tibbs Foundation has announced that the 32nd annual Casey Tibbs Foundation Tribute Dinner will be held on the evening of Saturday, Nov. 6, at the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center in Fort Pierre.

Each year, the Casey Tibbs Foundation pays tribute to six individuals who have exemplified and contributed to the sport of rodeo in South Dakota. These individuals are nominated into six different categories, based on specific criteria, before going through a selection process. The Casey Tibbs Foundation is pleased to announce that the 2021 honorees are as follows:

Past Rodeo Great: Dennis Hintz

Rodeo Cowgirl Great: Jana Griesmann

Rodeo Cowboy Great: Dugan Lebeau

Rodeo Promoter: Donna Keffler

Ranch Cowboy Family: The Jess and Edie Knight Family

Rodeo Animal Athlete: Oakie with Cash (Louie) -- owned by Lisa Lockhart

Advance tickets are required

for this event. Ticket sales start on Oct. 1. Individuals may purchase tickets by phone or in person through the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center. There are a limited number of tickets and, in years past, tickets have sold out quickly.

The honorees' photos and biographies are added to the permanent "Wall of Fame" each year, located in the Casey Tibbs Rodeo Center. The center will be accepting nominations through May for the 2022 Tribute Dinner.

For more information, contact Kalyn at the Casey Tibbs South Dakota Rodeo Center at 605-494-1094 or 605-222-3499.

Tom VanAnne, a longtime auto racing official, and Doug Johnson, the current speedway manager, will be the presenters at the September "History Talk" of the Minnehaha County Historical Society, speaking about the long history of Huset's Speedway in Brandon. The evening begins with a social at 6:30 p.m., followed by the program at 7 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 16, at the Old Courthouse Museum in Sioux Falls.

The 53rd annual Dakota Conference of the Northern Great Plains, a humanities and public affairs program of the Center for Western Studies at Augustana University in Sioux Falls, was held August 5-6.

During the conference two Awards for Distinguished Contribution to the Preservation of Cultural Heritage of the Northern Great Plains were given. The 2020 recipient was Dr. Norma Wilson of Vermillion for her 27-year teaching career at the University of South Dakota. The 2021 winner was Dr. Wayne Kvam, who was born and raised in Webster and graduated from Augustana before beginning a 36-year teaching career at Kent State University in Ohio.

Share what's happening at your museum or historical organization by sending it to Jeff.Mammenga@state.sd.us or mailing it to Hoofprints, SD State Historical Society, 900 Governors Dr., Pierre, SD 57501-2217.